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Spring Comes S L O W L Y! To Red Rock State Park



The first day of March provided Red Rock State Park some much needed rain, which further summoned a snail from its hiding place...

Photo by Ranger Halley Bagley

Rock Talk... Geology Hikes at RRSP



This typically dry wash quickly filled with a heavy monsoonal downpour. A prime example of geologic erosion at work.

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Upcoming Events For "Footprints" Newsletter

- * March 29th, Primitive Fire Making with Al Cornell 10-2 pm
- * March 30th 2 pm Sunday Lecture Series: "God, Gold, and Glory: The Coronado Expedition of 1540-1542.." Jim Turner
- * Friday April 4th, Volunteer Venture
- * April 12th, Natural Fibers Workshop with Roy Julian 1-3 pm
- April 13th, Guided Geology Hike 1 pm
- April 15th, Moonlight Hike 5 pm
- Naturalist led Bird Hikes every Wednesday & Saturday at 8 am
- * **Note:** Naturalist led Bird Hike times vary seasonally due to weather changes.
- * Naturalist led Nature Hikes daily at 10 am

Preserving Bird Habitats at RRSP

One of the simplest pleasures we get from bird and wildlife conservation is a genuine appreciation for our natural world. However Red Rock's mission to preserve and protect takes us much further than this. With the Earth's ever-vanishing habitat, Red Rock State Park becomes even more critical to environmental preservation each and every day. Due to its designation as a Center for Environmental Education and its vigilance in protecting the portion of Oak Creek that runs through it, Red Rock State Park offers critical habitat, and serves a vital sanctuary for birds.

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Cont from page 1 **Rock Talk... Geology Hikes at Red Rock State Park**

With another change of seasons, we revel in the wondrous transition of animal and plant populations, but the rocks stay the same. Or do they? The monthly Geology Hikes at Red Rock State Park explore these issues and many more that encourage us to appreciate the splendid rock colors and forms.



"For a billion years the patient earth amassed documents and inscribed them with signs and pictures which lay unnoticed and unused. Today, at last, they are waking up, because man has come to rouse them."

Hans Cloos: Conversation with the Earth; 1954

What principles of erosion can we apply to the landscapes as we hike? What is deep time? How do we as humans relate to the enormous changes that have and will continue to occur to the surrounding landforms? We do discuss geologic terms, but emphasize concepts that are more likely to abide in the memories of this second Sunday experience.

This popular hike lasting 2 ½ to 3 hours has been ongoing for more than a decade and it is a forum where park visitors are encouraged to ask questions as we stop at various waypoints of geologic import. Sedimentary and igneous strata are in our immediate viewing field, but they represent only a portion of the geologic record from 285 million years ago to the present.

We familiarize participants with that which can be seen and the depositions that are no longer present in our area in order to come to an understanding of tectonic and erosion forces. The hikes take place from September through May; come out and enjoy our Red Rock playground!

Written by RRSP Volunteer Chris Weld

One Star At A Time

Last summer we began holding "Star Parties"; an event for families to come to Red Rock State Park after hours, learn about the night sky, use viewing scopes, roast marshmallows, and maybe even meet a creature from another planet!

Red Rock State Park hosted our local astronomers collaborative called *Astronomers of Verde Valley*, to help guide visitors through the night's sky. This event was not only beneficial to our local community, but it went over so well with our visitors that we're excited to announce that we'll be hosting two additional "Star Parties" in the upcoming months.

In collaboration with *Astronomers of the Verde Valley* and *Keep Sedona Beautiful (KSB)*, Red Rock State Park was able to help KSB meet the requirements to become a 'International Dark Sky City'. By helping host several "Star Parties" throughout Sedona, KSB was able to show the *International Dark Sky Association (IDA)* that Sedona has more to offer than just our red rocks!

Inspired by the passion of the KSB volunteers, I wanted to do my part for ASP and Sedona. After some research, I found an organization called "One Star at a Time"; an organization dedicated to stopping light pollution and providing the public with star program opportunities. This seemed like a great chance to give back; Red Rock State Park is now officially a registered "Sky Park", part of a greater community of community parks, state parks, and national parks pledging to help protect our night's sky.

Ranger Halley Bagley



News from the Connections Program at Red Rock State Park

Like a new spring flower, the month of March announced the start of school groups returning to Red Rock State Park. We have seven days of outdoor education lined up for March and an additional six days reserved for April. Teaching time in April will be somewhat limited due to statewide educational testing. Nonetheless, we look forward to providing everyone in attendance with an engaging and meaningful outdoor learning experience.

Recently, Ranger Marlene and I had the opportunity to attend "Be Outdoors Arizona" at the Phoenix Zoo. At that meeting we met with various organizations that share a vested interest in outdoor education and play. The list included the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Maricopa County Parks, Phoenix Parks, and a variety of others.



Children are making the "Connection" at Red Rock State Park

*All that you touch, All that you see...
All that is found and all that is lost.
All that is now...*

Roger Waters



"An environment-based education movement--at all levels of education--will help students realize that school isn't supposed to be a polite form of incarceration, but a portal to the wider world."

Richard Louv: Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder

Be Outdoors Arizona aims "to encourage continuous nature-centered outdoor experiences that enrich the lives of children." They believe "that children and families who participate in outdoor activities are physically and mentally healthier and become better citizens."

Their current long-term goal is to develop a web site where each supporting agency can list their outdoor activity opportunities for families to access and find ways to be outdoors. We all believe that working collectively will accomplish more than if we work alone. It was a wonderful reminder of why we have our educational program here at Red Rock State Park. Use of this network will enable us to reach out to a larger and more diverse group of people. People that might not otherwise have considered Red Rock State Park as a destination point.

Last but not least, we are in the middle of our annual Volunteer Training Class. I am excited to say that

the recruitment list includes several people interested in becoming teachers within our Connections Program. We are very excited about welcoming new environmental educators to our Park.

I will end on this simple heart-felt note... To inspire the spirit of preservation within our youth, we must get them outside, get them involved in the environment, and help them experience the beauty and science of our world. Through our Connections Program we continue to make a positive and lasting impact.

Written by Ranger Allyson Holmes



Preserving Bird Habitats

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Since it is almost spring we will soon be looking for the Yellow-breasted Chat, an elusive bird that is difficult to spot in the trees. Last year Peggy James was lucky enough to get a picture of one of these beautiful birds. "Birding to me is like a treasure hunt," she says. "There is a finder's excitement in spotting them."

Red Rock State Park began conducting naturalist-led Bird Walks in January of 1989 and 25 years later, they still continue. Our Bird Walks have literally taken *thousands of visitors* into a world all too often overlooked by modern society.

Free from the adverse commercial and residential impacts that affect other unprotected sections of Oak Creek, RRSP's spectacular location attracts both common and rare species. Park records indicate that 183 different species of birds have been sighted here within the past 25 years. This list is long, colorful and includes rarities such as the Magnificent Hummingbird, Green Kingfisher, Huttons Vireo, Western Screech Owl, Golden Eagle and a Mandarin Duck.

The Park's educational components teach locals and visitors, students and adults, to respect the outdoors, packing out all litter, staying on trails and disturbing nothing during their visit. Non-birders may question why bird conservation is important and what difference it makes to the world at large.

Avid birders and bird watchers know, however, that bird and wildlife conservation is critical to the richness and diversity of the planet. Wild birds are an integral part of the ecosystem and serve many important purposes such as insect and rodent population control as well as seed distribution. They also provide a reliable food source for numerous predators.

The Audubon Society uses RRSP for one of its periodic bird inventory sites. I think they have done this for years, so have a long historic record that is vital to them! Red Rock State Park is designated by the Audubon Society as an Important Birding Area (IBA).

Red Rock State Park is a rare jewel in Sedona particularly since free flowing streams and their riparian habitats have disappeared to the tune of 90% within Arizona over the past 100 years. We owe it to future generations to preserve and protect those few areas that remain.

We currently have four active *and extremely dedicated* Volunteer Bird Walk Leaders. They are John Moore-13 years of service, Wayne Johnson- 6 years, Denise Klinger- 2 years, and Peggy James-1 year. These dedicated folks are the wind beneath our wings and key to the success of our unique and valued birding program.

Eric Buzonas- Assistant Manager



If you haven't joined the volunteers who lead the Bird walks at Red Rock State Park you are missing out on a fun and educational time. The Bird walks are slow-paced and take place on Wednesdays and Saturdays throughout the year. On an average day we see anywhere from 15 to 25 or more bird species.



"I am always looking for 'Mr. Owl', a Great Horned Owl," says Peggy. "I have seen him only twice but, I know he's out there, blending in with the Cottonwood trees..."



Primitive Fire-Making Survival Instructions

Red Rock State Park hosted two survival instructors during the month of March. On Saturday March 1st, nationally known survival expert Tony Nestor taught a course called "The Big 5". This 8-hour workshop provided an introduction to the fundamental skills needed for surviving in desert regions and the hazards associated with desert travel.

Through classroom lecture, slideshows, and hands-on activities students became acquainted with various desert skills such as emergency shelters, water location, signal mirror practice, heat-related injuries, venomous creatures, and survival kits for both cars and backpacks.

Tony Nestor has over 20 years of experience in survival instruction and outdoor leadership. He is also the author of four books on outdoor survival. Tony has provided survival training for the US Military, National Park Service, Exxon-Mobil, and served as a consultant for the *Discovery Channel* in Death Valley. He is also a freelance writer and has been published in numerous outdoor magazines including *Outside Magazine*, *BackHome*, *Wilderness Way*, and *Backwoodsman*.



By using several sticks and a leather strap Sedona resident Al Cornell took us back in time thousands of years.



On Saturday March 29th Al Cornell of the Verde Valley Search and Rescue Team taught a 4-hour class on Primitive Fire Making. Al's accomplishments are numerous and varied. Over the course of his lifetime, Cornell has mastered countless methods of fire making and wilderness survival skills.

Retired from the Army, he now teaches fire-making throughout the country at events such as Dirt Time, Rabbit Stick and Winter Count. Al has also given demonstrations at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum.

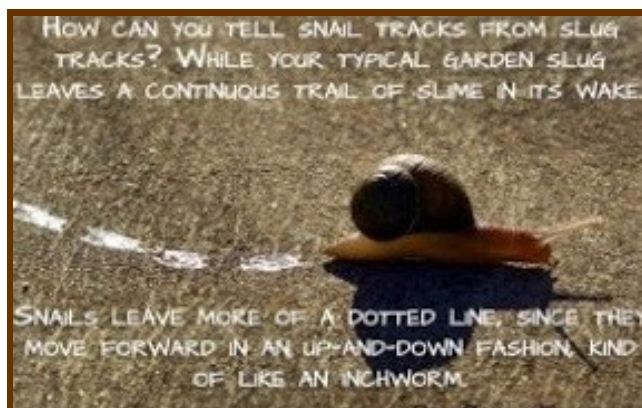
Submitted by Ranger Eric Buzonas

Al shares his knowledge of a once sacred tradition with a young man at Red Rock State Park. The magic & wonder of fire continues into yet another generation...



Do you know how you can tell if the silvery trails in your garden are from slugs or snail?

DailyRandomFacts.com



Snails!

